

Copyright
by
Caitlin Anne Halloran
2017

**The Report Committee for Caitlin Anne Halloran
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:**

Serious Play

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Amy Hautt

Sarah Canright

Serious Play

by

Caitlin Anne Halloran A.S, B.F.A

Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2017

Dedication

This report is dedicated to Yavy Men and strong funny women everywhere.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Graduate Committee: Sarah Canright, Nicole Awai, Beili Liu, Ann Reynolds and John Yancey. In addition, I would like to thank Amy Hautt, Troy Brauntuch, Jonas Hart and my peers for their support.

Abstract

Serious Play

Caitlin Anne Halloran, MFA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2017

Supervisor: Amy Haut

In my practice, two and three dimensions' masquerade as versions of one another and as parts of the other's environments. Associations are substituted for the names of colors, while objects attempt to pass as components of a painting's environment. Using color as a raw material, I conceal, confuse and demonstrate the messy nature of perception. I use painting, associative color and serious play to mimic logic, objectivity and hysteria. The speediness in the work suggests talking just fast enough to get a word in edgewise.

Because of a longstanding problem with authority, I make jokes about the serious things I wish to both criticize, imitate and understand.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	viii
Text.....	1
Color Wheels/Diagrams.....	6
Vision.....	11
Kites Color Test.....	14
Text.....	16
Tents.....	19
Humor.....	21
Camouflage.....	23
Bibliography.....	34

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Intuition Tuition</i> , 24"x16", gouache on paper, 2017.....	ix
Figure 2. <i>If you see something say something</i> , gouache on paper, 12"x 8.5", 2016.....	3
Figure 3. Installation, Mid Review, 2016.....	4
Figure 4. Installation, Mid Review, 2016.....	5
Figure 5. <i>Crimson. 8, Light and Shade</i> , Mary Gartside, 12"x 8" 1801.....	8
Figure 6. <i>Emotional gist</i> , 72"x 60", oil on canvas, 2016.....	9
Figure 7. <i>Peripheral vision test</i> , 4"x 6", 2016.....	10
Figure 8. <i>Pejoratives</i> , 36"x 42", oil and spray paint on ink jet print, 2016.....	11
Figure 9. <i>View-master piece</i> , 2016.....	11
Figure 10. <i>Projector piece</i> , 2016.....	11
Figure 11. HD Still from <i>Decor</i> , 2016.....	13
Figure 12. <i>Wanderer over a sea of fog</i> , Caspar David Friedrich, 1818.....	13
Figure 13. <i>Shame</i> , 34"x 46"x 4", curtain, cotton batting, velour blanket, 2016.....	16
Figure 14. <i>Intro to my ego</i> , 12"x 8.5" 2015.....	17
Figure 15. <i>Color Swatch Tent</i> , 2016.....	19
Figure 16. <i>Razzle Dazzle Camouflage google image screenshot 2/19/17</i>	22
Figure 17. <i>Bad camouflage. Hide and Seek</i>	23
Figure 18. <i>Razzle dazzle (box step)</i> 2017.....	25
Figure 19. <i>HD still Razzle dazzle (box step)</i> dimensions variable, 2017.....	26
Figure 20. <i>Painting machine</i> , 60"x20"x 15", canvas, paint, slide projector, 2017.....	28
Figure 21. <i>Untitled bench for Joan Mitchell's "rock bottom"</i> , 7"x9" 2017.....	29
Figure 22. <i>Visual Gist</i> , canvas, acrylic, spray paint, velour, batting, 72"x 60" 2017.....	31



Figure 1. Intuition Tuition, 24" x16", gouache on paper, 2017

You enroll in your local community college's art program after barely graduating from high school. After completing much of the foundations requirements, you sign up for your first painting class. You're told the professor has been teaching there forever and usually only teaches upper level classes. There is a big critique coming up. Max is going first. He's one of those people who just keeps taking independent studies. He will be, and has been, in every painting class. The professor is incredibly old and you assume that's why he never remembers your name. Max's paintings are tall monochromes of the 3 primary colors. You weave in and around looking at them from different angles just like you normally do. Max talks for a while about Greek mythology. You try to think about Greek mythology. The paint looks cheap and dry. You ask a question that you now can't remember.

You're probably wondering, where's the meat?



Figure 2. *If you see something say something*, gouache on paper, 2016

In my practice, two and three dimensions masquerade as versions of one another and as parts of the other's environments. Associations are disguised as the names of colors, while escaped physical objects attempt to pass as components of a painting's environment. Painting, associative color and serious play are used to mimic logic, objectivity and hysteria. Diagrams are a shorthand for abstraction, pedagogy and authority. Objects reference the body and the performative nature of play, painting, and sleight of hand. These devices are challenged by their under-made construction, similar to a slumping container or theatrical prop. Color is a raw material I manipulate in order to conceal, confuse and demonstrate the messy nature of perception. This is a hysterical investigation of meaning and material: through chewing things up, spitting them out and renegotiating the pieces. There is a speediness throughout the work that suggests talking just fast enough to get a word in edgewise.

Historically, color studies and systems have attempted to pin down, standardize and name color in the natural world. There is a direct relationship to the naming of things and our expanded ability to perceive them. The development and classification of pigments and their almost endless possible combinations led many artists to create their own color systems. These color systems often use diagrammatic language presenting itself as totalizing, neutral and authoritative. To the contrary, color theory is a pseudo-science incorporating mysticism, psychology, theory and practice. It is fundamentally based in the relative nature of color perception. Some of the major variables affecting our color vision are context, exposure and ability of the cones and rods in the retina. These factors affect our ability to distinguish nuances in color, value, the deceptive

effects of simultaneous color contrast and adaptation effects. These are some the reasons why color perception is simultaneously objective and subjective. The relative nature of color perception exemplifies the problems in attempts to universalize color systems.¹



Figure 3. Installation, Mid Review, 2016

¹ Albers, Josef. *Interaction of color*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
The relative nature of color



Figure 4. Installation, Mid Review, 2016

COLOR WHEELS/ DIAGRAMS

In color theory, color wheels are visual examples of the grammar of color, the rules and classes of color, their inflections and functions in relation to one another. I use color wheel pie charts and Venn diagrams to falsely quantify components in relationship of one to the other. My use of diagrams came out of a burlesque desire to specify meaning in subjective abstract paintings. There is difference between how we expect diagrams to function and the way they act in my paintings and drawings. Diagrams are generally employed to dispassionately frame complex issues. In my work they mimic an authoritative tone that is seemingly undermined by crappy execution. In actuality, my diagrams passionately map difference. I use diagrams and various framing devices to play with perceived authority. The diagrams are often wonky, malformed and fail to contain the colors or text they purport to frame. Objects slump, collapse and remain slightly undone. The colors press against the rigid structure, warping and renegotiating its boundaries. Aggressive color territories slip over borders challenging neighbors. The text is scrawled, capitalized, urgent and full of doubt. Together, the color sections and text exist in a passionate diagram failing to cleanly separate one section from another. (fig. 4)

This reinforces a viewer's reading of speed, play and change throughout the work. The handmade nature of the work and the way it implies the body refers to the performative nature of its making. There is tension in the way the objects invite and resist interaction. Examples include a tent that's a little too small to occupy (fig. 14) or a pie chart disguised as a cushion a bit too messy to sit upon. (fig. 4)

The Venn diagram is also at work as a framing device. Venn diagrams show the common territory between two incongruent ideas. Formally, they consist of two overlapping circles. In geometry these overlapping arcs create a lens. Venn diagrams have a relationship to vision, and are another common color mixing diagram. In my work, the delineated structure of these diagrams fail, as the painted area seeps through the center. This is the section used to visually represent the content that overlaps in the otherwise separate segments. The placement of the word in the inner center of the Venn diagram creates an abstract double pair of brackets or parenthesis around the word ((Facts)). (fig. 3) Here I play with the semantic irony of double meaning. The logic in the *Facts* painting continues my interest in color mixing and associations. I imagined the diagram as a blue filter. When the blue lens interacts with the diagram's yellow environment, the green section is created, green being one of the most perceivable colors in human color perception.



Figure 5. Mary Gartside. *Crimson*, 1808. Etching and watercolor.

Contrary to many color systems that use rigid geometry or delineations between the grammar of color, there is the work of Mary Gartside. Antithetical to Moses Harris, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Albert Munsell and many others, Gartsides abandons delineation and demonstrates the fluid interaction of color as Rorschach-like blots. (fig 5) Working between 1781 and 1809 in London, Gartside published two small and hand painted editions of her color system that masquerade as flower painting manuals. The first was titled *An Essay on Light and Shade, on Colors, and on Composition in General*, 1805, while the second edition published only three years later was renamed, *New Theory of Colors*. 1808. These publications are the earliest known color systems to have been made by a woman. ²Similar to Goethe and eventually Albers, Gartside focused her color system around the relational and nuanced nature of color based in the individual's optical experience.

² Loske, Alexandra. "Mary Gartside: A female colour theorist in Georgian England." *Sussex Research Online* : Sussex Research Online. August 01, 2010.



Figure 6. *Emotional gist*, 72"x60", oil on canvas, 2016

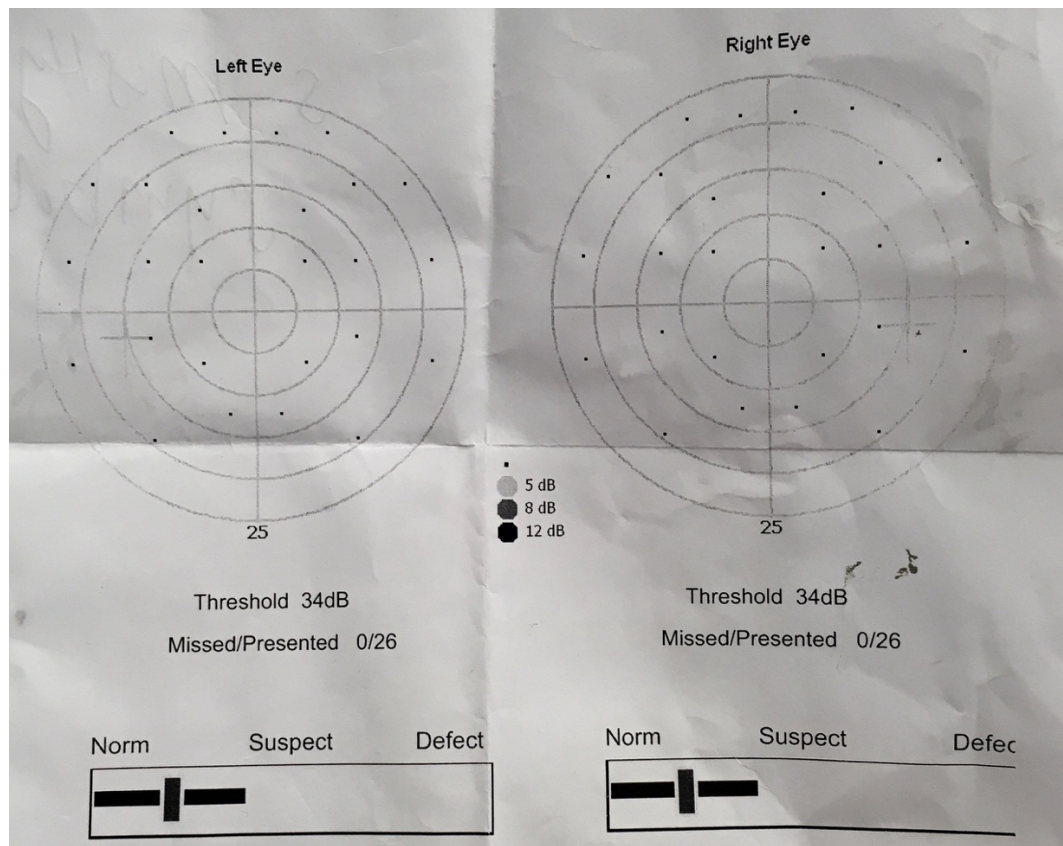


Figure 7. *Peripheral vision test, 2016*

VISION

I had previously contextualized my practice by relating the edge of a painting to the large range of our peripheral vision. Compositionally, forms pressed up and over the very edge of the physical painting, referencing this extension.(fig.6) In investigating the unframed and blurry, I was eager to call attention to what's excluded from the frame and move it into focus. This was a loose metaphor for the way dominant narratives authorially frame small portions of situations, making large swaths less visible. The peripheral is a large portion of our vision that holds an essential role in how we intuit. The majority of our vision is varying degrees of peripheral vision, with only 10 percent central or macular. Peripheral vision functions in a gray scale and is adept at perceiving motion and the overall the emotional gist of a scene.³



Figure 8. *Pejoratives*, 2016 Figure 9. *View-master piece*, 2016 Figure 10. *Projector piece*, 2016

³ Gutiérrez, Aída, Lauri Nummenmaa, and Manuel G. Calvo. "Enhanced processing of emotional gist in peripheral vision." *The Spanish journal of psychology* 12, no. 02 (2009): 414-423.

We project onto the world more than we “objectively” discern it. Camera-like, the eye applies a filter that obscures reality. The *View-master piece* attempts to blend this way of thinking about vision with the color wheel paintings. The View-Master is a plastic binocular- shaped toy that accepts disks.(fig.9) It was a cheaply mass produced stereoscope marketed for children. The cardstock reels hold 7 pairs of images that, with the slight variation of position, replicates binocular depth perception. Often they contained images of exotic animals, major landmarks or environmental wonders like the Grand Canyon. Instead of picturesque scenes, I placed 7 associative color and word relationships in the slots, scratching in the text. (fig 9) This project eventually led to the scanned inkjet prints (fig 8) and the projector piece. (fig 10) Both the prints and the projector piece translated transparent pigment on film, that was turned into handmade slides or scanned, enlarged and printed. The projectors hum creates a needy rhythm as each click snapped a new slide into place. Pauses of varying lengths were made via the absence of slides and maintained by the carousel's set speed. The text in these works were painted or scratched in. The combination of the scratching, the distortion of the binocular depth perception and the language used created an emotionally excessive and moody combination. In *View-Master piece*, transparent cool red is labeled and capitalized *SHAME*, dirty cream pink is *THE OTHER WHITE MEAT* and canary yellow is *ONE LINER*. These are examples of the process and play-based methodology that leads my work, and demonstrates the ways that artwork, material and refuse are intertwined.



Figure 10. Still from *Decor*, 2016



Figure 11. *Wanderer over a sea of fog*, Caspar David Friedrich, 1818

KITES COLOR TEST

In an attempt to expand my own farcical color system, I took five color and word relationships, combined into the form of five kites, for a set of field tests. I made video documentation of their differences in multiple trips to the beach. In thinking about the “unreliable narrator” I removed the diegetic sound from the videos and replaced it with my own oral imitation of the sea and wind. My interest in the “unreliable narrator” stems from its ability to signal to the reader/viewer that the authorial narrator is not to be trusted, thereby necessitating the reader/viewer to actively sort through what is presented. I combine the flight failures of the kites, the picturesque landscape and the sound of my own anxious breath to disrupt the viewer's expectations of the scene, its audio and meaning. This is an absurd kind of scientific test in which I use my body, the environment, props and elements of slapstick comedy to parody objectivity and subjectivity. In the looped video clips, all of the kites’ ‘failures’ are edited out, leaving an awkward spinning kite that never seems to fall below hip level.

The wide shot attempts to mimic romantic landscape paintings like the *Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog*, by Caspar David Friedrich.(fig.11)⁴ Early 19th century paintings often used pastoral scenes that demonstrate the gendered dichotomy between man and nature, and the dominance of man over the environment. In *Wanderer*, a man stands at the apex of the painting reinforced by the extreme contrast of his body to his

⁴ "Friedrich, Caspar D. Caspar David Friedrich." Digital image. Triangulations. Accessed March 31, 2017. <https://triangulations.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/caspar-david-friedrich-wanderer-above-the-sea-of-fog.jpg>.

environment. Contrary to *Wanderer*, the video *Decor* presents an anti-heroic relationship between the figure and her environment.

In testing these color relationships, I used the location by the sea to parody essentialist feminist symbolism. A biological essentialist view of gender equates the socially constructed with a fixed biological phenomenon. Many first-wave feminists embraced these historical notions about gender, using specific attributes of femininity, including creativity and empathy that, they argued, made women ethically superior. In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, the female protagonist discovered and transformed herself at the seaside. ⁵Staging the performance by the sea, and by anxiously mimicking the environment's sounds, I parody oneness with the divinely feminine environment.

⁵ Chopin, Kate. *Awakening*. New York: W W NORTON, 2017.

TEXT

Text often references a metonymic substitution for my associations with the color or form in which it resides. The text acts as an entry, a way of disrupting the image.

Words become suspect as nouns become verbs, remaining active. The nonlinear rhetoric in diagrams creates both agreement and disagreement, engaging the viewer in a search for 'truth' or 'logic'. This dialectic is layered further by the color or diagram format in which the text resides. In my representational paintings, speech is referenced by the context of the scene or a speech bubble: a group of people at a table, in a lecture hall or a person gesturing towards a brick wall. These scenes reference different speech typologies whether casual, pedagogical, or argumentative. (fig 13)



Figure 12. *Shame*, 2017



Figure 13. *Intro to my ego*, 2015

The stuffed text-based sculptures extend my interest in language and color associations. The stuffed letter objects are capitalized, crudely sewn and almost figurative. The first version was made from a dark red window curtain, stuffed and hand-sewn into the word *shame*. (fig 12) Both my associations with that particular hue and its role as a curtain prompted the association for me. *Shame* lays on the floor atop a teal velour throw blanket. The simultaneous contrast of colors, and the polyester fibers of the blanket creates a shimmer. It is an attempt to viscerally demonstrate the imprecise nature of even precise language.

Text may be capitalized, scrawled, cut out, collaged or stuffed. The way the text appears mirrors the way spoken language fluctuates. I use questions, declarations, second person and the pronouns *you* and *I* to directly implicate the viewer. Tension is produced by assertive language. I employ a semantics that connotes not what words mean but how they make us feel. The text's credibility is undermined through contradiction, informality or exaggeration. This causes the reader/viewer to make sense of the situation on their own terms and exaggerates the need for context, that meanwhile activates the other pieces in an installation.

TENTS

The tents are examples of inside and outside, domestic space, shelter, and a place for the body. In the *Color Swatch Tent*, the swatch text labels can be viewed only from inside, playing with the idea of a double audience. (fig 14) The tent is made from repurposed domestic materials, hand-sewn and painted in a provisional-looking way.



Figure 14. *Color Swatch Tent*, 2016

The installation is comprised of a 5ft x 3ft x 3ft tent sewn from white bed sheets and a small gouache piece tacked to the wall. The outside of the tent is painted with dirty green and pink swatches painted with seeming urgency. The inside of the tents reveals the desaturated colors labeled with text. Above and behind the tent on the wall is a small 9 x 5-inch piece of paper with similarly painted swatches but each with the interior rectangle removed. The removal of the rectangles from the paint strokes creates a reverse framing of color. As the viewer compares the two objects, there is tension around the absence of cuts in the tent with its nearly identically colored swatches. The two objects are an imperfect double grid: painted swatches on the tent and the cutout color samples in the paper. The interior text in the tent implies that the removed sections from the paper piece may have affected an erasure of similar text. The sound component to this piece is ASMR-like at the level of a whisper. ASMR, or Autonomous sensory meridian response, is a physiological response triggered by soft repetitive sounds and motions, including tapping and whispering. The response is often described as a pleasant tingly sensation the moves through the body and may be relaxing. The audio is a nonlinear series of questions that mimic the dialogue of a critique. The whispering encourages a viewer to enter the tent that then leads to the discovery of its hidden text. The rhetoric of critique is inverted into a soothing whisper.

HUMOR

Humor erupts in the slippage between incongruent ideas, the seriousness of play, shifts of scale and material translations. The loose, handmade nature of the work has an earnest but irreverent sensibility, exaggerated by differences in material and approach. In disrupting expectations, I encourage the viewer to re-establish them from a different perspective. The anthropologist Mary Douglas argues “that jokes...connect widely differing concepts’ in a manner which destroys hierarchy and order”⁶ Paradoxes of form, tone and media uses our own understandings and assumptions of what does and does not belong together. Incongruity, while being humorous, may make visible the binaries and hierarchies that hide in plain sight. Incongruity resolution theories in humor are based in the punchlines ability to mean multiple and usually contradicting things at the same time. Susan Purdie argues in *Comedy: The mastery of discourse*, that joking is important because it's both pleasurable and “invites a breach of the rules which usually constrain meaning.”⁷ Purdie describes this ‘transgression’ to be in the uniting of unsuitable parts, the misuse of language, the excessive, irrational or inept. Purdie also compares the position of comedy within ‘traditional literary discourses’ to ‘female’ in gender constructs: Comedy is the different, lesser, subordinate genre”.⁸

⁶ Douglas, Mary. "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception." *Man* 3, no. 3 (1968): 369. doi:10.2307/2798875.

⁷ Purdie, Susan. *Comedy: The Mastery of Discourse*, 4. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

⁸ Purdie, Susan. *Comedy: The Mastery of Discourse*, 120. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

My interest in *Irony* is based on the idea of the “double audience,”⁹ one who hears, understands and perceives ironic meaning more accurately and another, whom in hearing or seeing the same situation does not. It is also in what Hutcheon suggests is a postcolonial and feminist “counter-discourse” a way of proposing alternative meaning and criticality onto something that otherwise seems fixed.¹⁰

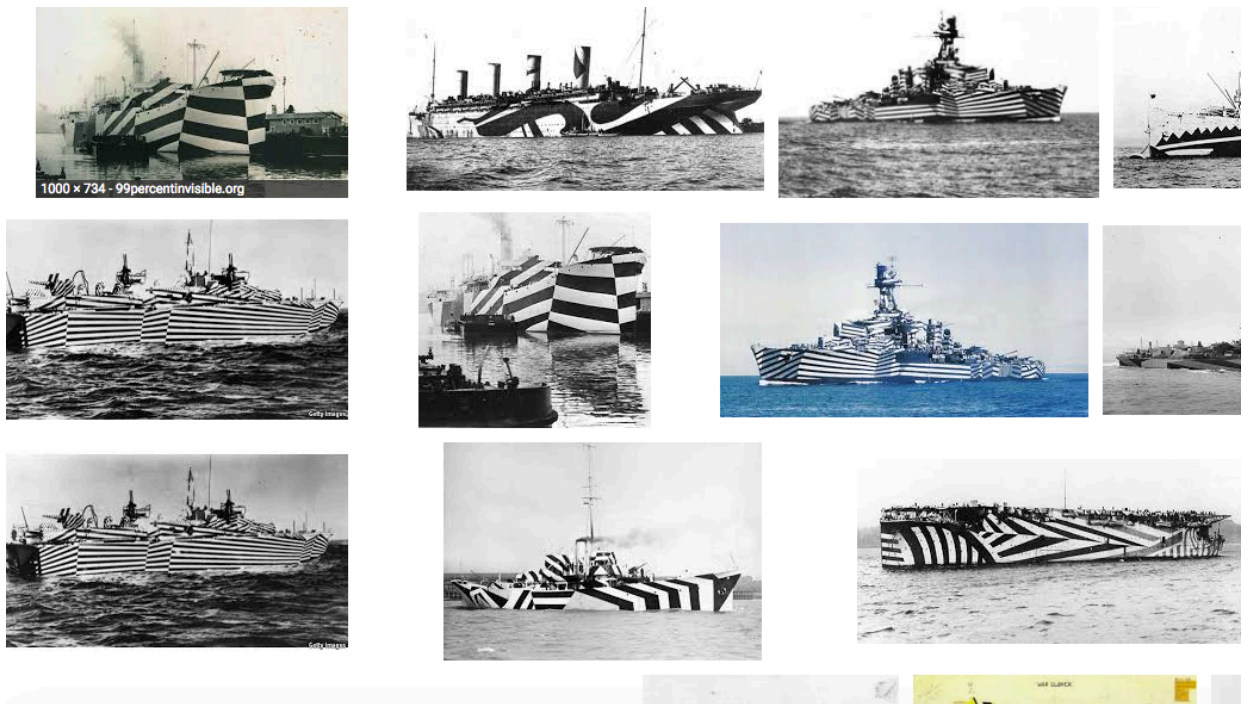


Figure 15. *Razzle Dazzle Camouflage* google image screenshot 2/19/17

⁹ Hutcheon, Linda. *Irony's edge: the theory and politics of irony*, 94. London: Routledge, 2005.

¹⁰ Hutcheon, Linda. *Irony's edge: the theory and politics of irony*, 184. London: Routledge, 2005

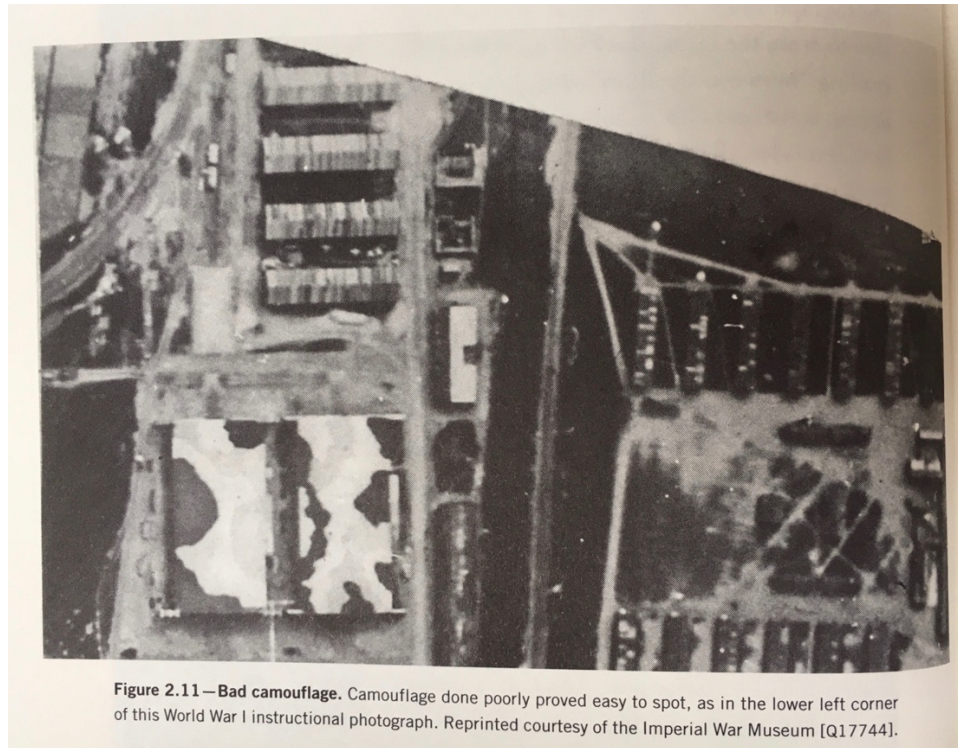


Figure 16. *Bad camouflage. Camouflage done poorly proved easy to spot. Hide and Seek* (p102)

CAMOUFLAGE

Abbott Thayer was an American painter in the late 1800's who aimed to create a universal theory and application of camouflage. Although he and others developed and experimented with successful techniques, their findings privileged specific and motionless environmental qualities. This magical disappearing act worked best in the still and controlled framing of photography. Thayer manipulated “two distinct visual phenomena:”obliterative countershading” and “disruptive patterning,”¹¹ which he observed extensively through bird colorations. He was also a proponent for applying his

¹¹ Shell, Hanna Rose. *Hide and seek: camouflage, photography, and the media of reconnaissance*. New York: Zone books, 2012.

theories about disruptive patterns to naval battleships, which he argued could be “applied to battleships and merchant vessels to great effect.”¹²

Around World War I, people tried to devise a universal camouflage strategy for warships, a way of concealing them in all weather situations. They failed. Rather than settling on an average, they did the opposite. Their solution, *Razzle dazzle*, or *Dazzle* painting, instead used high contrasting geometric stripes and bombastic graphic marks with the intention of confusing the legibility of shape, size and speed of the camouflaged ship. These bold disruptive patterns were intended to break up the mass of the ship, confusing the human eye and the mechanical eye of long range viewfinders of the time. Nations developed their own distinct dazzle designs in order to knowingly differentiate themselves from enemy ships. *Dazzle* painting’s use became widespread by many countries despite a lack of factual confirmation of its ability to work in this context. Hanna Rose Shell argues that early forms of camouflage in the time of WWII and specifically disruptive painting techniques were “unwieldy, labor intensive, and often wholly or largely ineffective.”¹³ In particular, Shell describes the difficulties in camouflaging moving transport due to their continuous movement and change of environment.

¹² Shell, Hanna Rose. *Hide and seek: camouflage, photography, and the media of reconnaissance*. 12, New York: Zone books, 2012.

¹³ Shell, Hanna Rose. *Hide and seek: camouflage, photography, and the media of reconnaissance*. 101, New York: Zone books, 2012



Figure 17. Razzle dazzle (box step) 2017



Figure 18. *Razzle Dazzle (box step)* video still 2017

In *Razzle Dazzle (box step)* (fig 17) (fig 18), I play with camouflage and the gendered performance of partner dancing. Bombastic marks that loosely reference *Razzle Dazzle* camouflage cover a cylindrical tent made of repurposed domestic fabrics. The exterior form conceals a plush, rectangular, neon green interior that comfortably allows for two viewers at a time. The tent interior is a green fleece that further obscures the semi-camouflaged dancing figure projected onto the wall surface. The intimate interior creates an enigmatic womb-like space for viewing the video. I removed the diegetic sound and replaced it with an unconvincing version. The new audio imitates ASMR, mixing and replacing the soothing physiological effects of the soft repetitive sound of

dancing footsteps with an anxious scratching sound. The accompanying soundtrack is a recording of paintbrush rustling sounds that cycle in and out of sync with the dancers' steps. The leading dance partner wears a green bodysuit that fails to match the horizonless green-screen environment.

Chroma key green and compositing are tools used to erase and add alternate images in video editing. Our understanding of the green screen activates the footage, as it is a device that facilitates concealment and spatial alternatives. In this way, a viewer may imagine alternatives for the space and lead dance character. Chroma key green becomes the vehicle for our projections, associations and physiological responses. In the animal world, camouflage is an anti-predatory strategy that often manipulates shifts in color. These manipulations are not always intended to make something disappear, but can also be used to confuse or imitate something else. Motion dazzle is a camouflage strategy of unpredictable movement intended to confuse a predator.

Within the tent, the viewer's eyes will adapt to the darkness and intensity of green. This adaptation effect will exhaust the green cones in the eye, temporally affecting the viewer's field of vision with a pink cast, once the viewer steps out of the tent. The cylindrical exterior of the tent is painted with cream and grey marks that appear slightly more aggressive in their contrast and redness as a result of this adaptation effect. The title *razzle dazzle* playfully references camouflage, intentional confusion and painting while *(box step)* references dancing and the cylindrical shape that brackets the square tent center.



Figure 19. Painting Machine, 2017



Figure 20. *Untitled (bench) for Joan Mitchell's "Rock Bottom"*, 7"x 9", 2017

In *Untitled (bench) for Joan Mitchell's "Rock Bottom"* (fig 20), I placed stuffed bench form in front of Joan Mitchell's *Rock Bottom* 1960-61 in the Blanton museum in Austin Texas. Mitchell is quoted as saying *Rock Bottom* "it's a very violent painting," in both the museum plaque and Linda Nochlin 2002 Whitney Biennial piece *Joan Mitchell: A Rage to Paint*. In placing my bench in proximity of Rock bottom I wanted to draw lines connecting what Nochlin calls "gendered rage", painting and abstraction.¹⁴ The sculpture is a outlined cartoonish bench is painted onto a slightly larger stuffed form. The

¹⁴ Mitchell, Joan, Jane Livingston, and Linda Nochlin. *The paintings of Joan Mitchell: , Whitney Museum of American Art, New York*, 50 Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

negative space around the drawing of the bench is painted a maroonish grey that nearly matches the stained hardwood floor, causing the drawing to appear to hover. Camouflage makes visible how easily our perception is manipulated while demonstrating the particularities of an environment's context. This camouflaged effect is exaggerated by the still framing of photography. The bench form appears both animal or bodily, counteracting the way the drawing suggests a sharp two-dimensional perspective. The presence of the bench directly in front of a painting signals that the painting is worthy or requires extra consideration. The bench as a form, and its inability to actually support the body connotes a lo fi trap. Rather than a 'neutral' white frame, the small photograph is surrounded by a hot pink substitute.



Figure 21. *Visual Gist*, 2017

In *Visual Gist* (fig 21) I continue my practice of translating drawings into three dimensions. This is based on a 2016 drawing of two figures/fingers looking at an abstract painting in which the smudges mimic a Rorschach test. (fig 2) In this piece, the three

dimensional figures/fingers are made from an off-colored velour blanket, crudely sewn together, stuffed and drawn on with black spray paint. Each is five feet tall. The figures/fingers are placed in close proximity to a cartoon-like painting of a room hung with an abstract painting. The figures place us looking at them looking at the painting. Finger-like, we see them with either their painted nail beds facing us or as if their ink smudged finger tips made the Rorschach marks.

I use the framework of painting, humor and various framing devices to engage and rub up against authority. I use humor to reject high seriousness and macho bullshit. Contradictions make binaries visible, resulting in an opportunity to sort through hierarchies in moments of shared subjectivity.¹⁵ I use the metaphor of the peripheral to point to what may be outside the parameters of the dominant narrative.

My practice is based in a combination of rigorous play, dissonance, farce and emotional excess. I mimic hysteria and the subversive potential of “the angry woman”¹⁶ by catalyzing humor, the critical edge of irony, feminist theory and rage. I use the framework of painting, the language of cartoons and text to build tension around our expectations of Art forms contrary to how they actually appear. Color systems that attempt to regulate and standardize, fail. Pedagogical tools are concealed in an irrational fashion and deliver blank, subjective and obtuse lessons. Structures and diagrams attempt

¹⁵ Purdie, Susan. *Comedy: The Mastery of Discourse*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

¹⁶ Whitlock, Gillian, 'Have you read the one about the angry women who laughed?', *Kunapipi*, 7(2), 1985.

to pass or claim authority they don't necessarily deserve. Language is used and misused to be both specific and ambiguous. In parsing out my own bastardized truths around color, language and meaning, I hybridize fact and fiction, aiming to mimic logic, like a baby in a suit.

Bibliography

- Albers, Josef. *Interaction of color*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Batchelor, David. *Chromophobia*. London: Reaktion books, 2007.
- Batchelor, David. *The luminous and the grey*. London: Reaktion books, 2014.
- Douglas, Mary. "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception." *Man* 3, no. 3 (1968): 368. doi:10.2307/2798875.
- Chopin, Kate. *Awakening*. New York: W W NORTON, 2017.
- "Friedrich, Casper D. Caspar David Friedrich." Digital image. Triangulations. Accessed March 31, 2017. <https://triangulations.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/caspar-david-friedrich-wanderer-above-the-sea-of-fog.jpg>.
- Gutiérrez, Aída, Lauri Nummenmaa, and Manuel G. Calvo. "Enhanced processing of emotional gist in peripheral vision." *The Spanish journal of psychology* 12, no. 02 (2009): 414-423.
- Halberstam, Judith. *The queer art of failure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Huizinga, Johan. *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*. Angelico Press, 2016.
- Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's edge: the theory and politics of irony* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- Loske, Alexandra. "Mary Gartside: A female colour theorist in Georgian England." Sussex Research Online : Sussex Research Online. August 01, 2010. Accessed March 01, 2017. <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/2510/>.
- Orwell, George. *Politics and the English language*. London: Penguin, 2013.
- Purdie, Susan. *Comedy: the mastery of discourse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Shell, Hanna Rose. *Hide and seek: camouflage, photography, and the media of reconnaissance*. New York: Zone books, 2012.
- Whitlock, Gillian, 'Have you read the one about the angry women who laughed?', Kunapipi, 7(2), 1985. Available at:<http://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol7/iss2/22>